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American Association for the advancement of Science, microscopical subsection, meets annually in connection with the migratory sessions of the association. Chairman for the Nashville meeting, 1877, Dr. R. H. Ward, of Troy, New York; for the St. Louis meeting, 1878, Dr. Geo. S. Blackie, of Nashville, Tenn.

Dunkirk Microscopical Society. President, Geo. E. Blackham, M.D.; secretary and treasurer, A. P. Alling, M.D.

Fairmount Microscopical Society. President, S. H. Griffith, M.D.; secretary and treasurer, Wm. C. Stevenson, Jr.; managers, John Gordon Gray, Thomas D. Ingram, M.D., and Henry Winter Davis.

Nature Club, Albany, New York. Organized October 1877. Microscopy a prominent feature. Meets at residences of members on the second and fourth Monday evenings of each month. President, Geo. T. Stevens, M.D.; vice-president, D. J. Pratt; secretary, Richard Prescott.

State Microscopical Society of Illinois. President, Henry W. Fuller; vice-presidents, Lester Curtis, M.D., and Chas. S. Fellows; secretary, H. F. Atwood; corresponding secretary, O. C. Oliver, M.D.; treasurer, B. W. Thomas; trustees, S. J. Jones, M.D., Professor E. Bastin, W. H. Summers, H. M. Thompson and James Colgrove.

Troy Scientific Association; microscopical section. Chairman, R. H. Ward, M.D.; vice-chairman, Rev. A. B. Hervey; secretary, Professor A. W. Bower.

Tyndall Association; section of microscopy. President, Rev. I. F. Stidham; secretary and treasurer, Curtis C. Howard; curator, Professor T. C. Mendenhall.

EXCHANGES.—A Curtis' section cutter, made by Miller, of New York (cost $20.00), for microscopical objects or books. Address offers to C. E. H., No. 1 Gale Place, Troy, N. Y.

Plumule scales of small cabbage butterfly (*Pieris rapæ*), mounted, for good slides. Address Edward Pennock, 805 Franklin street, Philadelphia.

Very fine mountings of shells from the Bermudas, for objects of special interest. Address C. C. Merriman, Rochester, N. Y.

Material: Marine algæ, diatoms in situ on algæ from east and west coasts, musci, lichens, ferns, lycopodia, garnet sand, &c., in exchange for mounted slides. M. A. Booth, Longmeadow, Mass.

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## SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— Two articles on the evolution of nerves and nerve-systems, illustrated by the structure of *Aurelia*, a type of the lowest group of animals in which a nervous system appears, have been published by G. J. Romanes, in *Nature*, for July 26th, and August 2d. By removing the eight nervous ganglia, the whole disc of the jelly-fish presents not merely the protoplasmic qualities of excitability and contractility, but also the essentially nervous quality of conducting stimuli to a distance irrespective of the passage of a contractile wave. He therefore concludes that there can be no longer any question that we have here to deal with a tissue already so far differentiated from primitive protoplasm, that the distinguishing function of nerve has become fully established.

— Dr. Sachs, who was sent to Venezuela by the Berlin Academy of Science, for the purpose of studying the electric eel in its native haunts, has returned, says *Nature*, after an absence of ten months, with a rich store of valuable observations.—A second specimen of *Archæopteryx lithographica* has been discovered near Solenhofen; this specimen is much more perfect than the other, and possesses the entire head.—The bones of the skull of *Amia calva* have been described in detail by T. W. Bridge, in the English *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology.*

— Professor E. D. Cope has lately visited the Nickajack Cave near Chattanooga in Company with Professors Loverell and Nipher, Dr. Walker and Mr. Lindsley. The cave is as large as the Mammoth or Wyandotte caves, and is traversed by a large stream. He found an abundance of a blind craw-fish and several small crustacea, some of them allied to Cæcidotæa. He also procured the myripod, *Spirostrephon cavernarum*, a spider with eyes, and a Raphidophora, etc.

— We have received some advance sheets of Erklärungen zu den Zoologischen Wandtafeln, herausgegeben von R. Leuckart, professor in Leipzig, and Dr. H. Nitsche, professor in Tharand. Taf. i.–iii. Cassel, Theodor Fischer, 1877. These are colored diagrams, printed from stone, and are well selected and in all respects admirable. They are designed for the use of schools and colleges, and the series will, when finished, comprise about one hundred sheets, accompanied by an explanation of each plate in German, French and English. The price to subscribers for the whole work will be from eighty pfennigs to two marks (a mark is 32 cents). It will be seen by this that the diagrams as a whole will be quite cheap.

—The death of Professor James Orton, occurred about the 24th of October last, while he was crossing Lake Titicaca, *en route* for Puno. He had been some time in Bolivia, and having relinquished his journey to the Beni River, was on his way home. Professor James Orton was bora at Seneca Falls, N. Y., April 21, 1830. He was graduated at Williams College in 1855, and in 1858 at the Andover Theological Seminary. After traveling in Europe and in the East, he was ordained a congregational minister in 1860. In 1866 he became instructor in the natural sciences at Rochester University. The year following he went at the head of an expedition from Williams College to South America. On this occasion he crossed the continent by Quito, the Napo and the Amazon, discovering the first fossils found in the Amazon valley. In 1869 he became Professor of Natural History at Vassar College. In 1873 Professor Orton made a second journey across South America, from Para up the Amazon to Lima and Lake Titicaca. About a year ago Professor Orton returned once more to South America, to undertake alone and with limited means, the exploration of the Great Beni River, which carries the waters of Eastern Bolivia to the Amazon, by way of the Madeira. His works are: "The Miner's Guide and Metallurgists' Directory" (1849); "The Proverbalist and Poet" (1852); The Andes and the Amazon" (1870); "Underground Treasures; How and Where to Find Them" (1872); and "Comparative Zoology" (1875).

— Messrs. S. H. Scudder, of Cambridge, and F. C. Bowditch, of Boston, have just returned from a two months' tour in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah, where, under the direction of Dr. Hayden, they have been exploring for fossil insects, and collecting specimens especially in the high regions. They report having secured many specimens of fossil insects at different points along the railways from Pueblo to Cheyenne, and from Cheyenne to Salt Lake, as well as at Lakin, Kansas, and Garland, and Georgetown, Col., and in various parts of the South Park and surrounding region. Ten days were spent at Green River, and in that vicinity, in exploring the tertiary strata for fossil insects, but with very unsatisfactory results. Near Florisant, the tertiary basin was found to be exceedingly rich in insects and plants. Mr. Scudder spent several days in the careful survey of this basin, and estimates that the extent of the insect-bearing shales there is at least fifty times as great as that of those in Southern Bavaria. Six or seven thousand specimens of insects, and 2,000 or 3,000 of plants have already been received from Florisant, and as many more are expected before the close of the year. Arrangements were also made with persons who have found a new and rich deposit of fossils in the tertiary strata in Wyoming, to forward all the specimens obtained there.

Mr. Scudder believes that the tertiary strata of the Rocky Mountain region are richer in the remains of fossil insects than any others in the world, and that within the next few months the amount of material at hand for the study of the subject, will be greater than was ever before possessed by any single naturalist.

— Professor Joseph Leidy, the comparative anatomist and microscopist, has also recently returned from his second visit to the West, under the direction of Dr. Hayden. His field of operations during the past season, was the country about Fort Bridger, Unitah Mountains and the Salt Lake Basin. The specimens he has collected comprise the lowest and simplest forms of animal life, the most minute requiring high microscopic power to distinguish their structure.

—Captain Howgate has received a letter via Scotland, from Captain Tyson, who commands the *Florence*, the advance vessel of the American Arctic Expedition. It is dated September 29, and reports Captain Tyson's safe arrival at Niuntilick Harbor, Cumberland Gulf, after a tedious voyage of forty days. He proposes moving to the head of the gulf in a few days, to go into winter quarters, and carry out his instructions in reference to the collection of material. The crew were all in good health and spirits. Messrs. Sherman and Kumlein are reported as doing well in their respective departments.

—We regret to learn that the note on page 749, volume xi, has been regarded by Dr. Brewer as too personal, and construed as an affront. The writer begs us to disclaim for him the slightest intention of reflecting upon Dr. Brewer's veracity and sincerity in his conduct of the sparrow controversy. The bantering sentence seemed to bear its own credentials; but since it has been misconstrued, the writer permits us to substitute the following: " Dr. Thomas M. Brewer, has so long remained in what I consider to be his honest misapprehension of the real bearing of alleged facts, in the face of testimony no less explicit, that it is no longer a question with me whether he will continue to argue as heretofore against such bearing of the testimony.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

National Academy of Science.—At the session held in New York, October 23d to 25th, the following papers on subjects relating to natural science were read: On the Development of Flounders, by A. Agassiz. On the Morphology of the Antlers of the Cervidæ, by Theodore Gill. On some new Fossil Fishes from Ohio and Indiana; on the Geological Age of the Western Lignites, by J. S. Newberry. On some Gigantic Dinosaurian Reptiles from the Wealden of the Rocky Mountains; American Cretaceous Birds, by O. C. Marsh. On the Air-Sacs of Locusts, by A. S. Packard, Jr. On the Glycogenic Functions of the Liver, and its relation to Vital Force and Vital Heat, by Joseph LeConte. Biographical Memoir of Louis Agassiz. First part, relating to his Life and Work in Europe, by A. Guyot.

Academy of Science, St. Louis, Nov. 5.—Dr. Engelmann presented an additional paper on the curious mode of fertilization of the *Agave shawii*. Dr. Engelmann expatiated upon the process of development of the flower. It opens in the evening, and anthers shed